

ISLAM

The act of giving generates love

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

By *zakat* it is meant that a fixed amount is subtracted at the end of each year from the wealth of the affluent people.

In this way the remaining wealth is purified. By one part of it being given to the cause of God, the rest is rendered lawfully usable for the almsgiver.

Deducting *zakat* from one's earning is a material acknowledgement of the fact that the actual giver is God.

Since the giver is God, the recipient is duty bound to spend it in His cause. The law of *zakat* is to take from those who have wealth and give it away to those who do not. This rotation of wealth is a way to balance social inequality.

In this way, the wealthy are reminded with what is due from them to those who are less well-favoured in life, or who are totally destitute.

Zakat is an important part of the Islamic code of ethics.

On the one hand, *zakat* purifies the giver of feelings like miserliness and selfishness, and generates the spirit of generosity and humanitarianism.

On the other hand, the receiver also benefits in the sense that he begins to consider others as his brothers and well-wishers. Thus, his heart is not corroded with feelings of jealousy or revenge towards them. Instead, feelings of love and respect are born within him for them.

Since this *zakat* is given for the cause of God, its most important value is that of an act of worship. True, it is distributed among the people, but in its essence it becomes a means of linking the giver with God, of bringing man closer to God.

Zakat in spirit is an act of worship, while in its external form it is the carrying out an act of social service.